asset-creating public works programmes every year at minimum wages for atleast one able bodied person in every poor household. The scheme is expected to provide substantial employment opportunities for the unemployed persons.

Beedi workers in Chhattisgarh

2471. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Will the Minister of LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that more than 50,000 families work in the multi-crore beedi industry in Chhattisgarh beedi producing belt;

(b) if so, whether despite the laws that govern this industry, the beedi workers are paid much less than the minimum wage and have no benefits and are constantly at risk of respiratory diseases;

(c) whether Government would make a health survey in the State and provide them with free medical care and ensure minimum wages; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI SIS RAM OLA): (a) There are about 20,000 identified beedi workers engaged in beedi industry in the Chhattisgarh State.

(b) to (d) The minimum wages fixed for beedi workers in Chhattisgarh are Rs. 66.60 per day. As per the Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966, the responsibility for enforcement of the provisions of the Act, including minimum wages, lies with the State Government. The Government have been implementing several welfare schemes for the beedi workers including Group Insurance, reimbursement of treatment cost for major diseases like heart by-pass surgery, kidney transplantation, cancer, TB, minor surgeries including maternity benefits. The Government have been insisting upon the State Governments to ensure the payment of minimum wages.